

HIROSHIGE

53 Stations of the Upright Tokaido

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The Upright Tokaido

Hiroshige (1797 - 1858)

Date: 1855
Publisher: Tsutaya Kichizo
Seals: Date and Aratame
Signed: Hiroshige hitsu
Size: O-ban tate-e

Winding along the eastern coast of Japan, the Tokaido was the most traveled road during the Edo period (1603-1868). By 1689, fifty-three stations connected the eastern capital of Edo (modern Tokyo), the seat of the shogun, to the imperial capital of Kyoto, the home of the emperor. Cutting across rivers and mountains, this artery of Edo-period Japan pulsed folklore, politics, artistic inspiration, and insatiable zeal for adventure.

In the early 19th century, Hiroshige captured life on the Tokaido as never before. Born in Edo in 1797, Hiroshige was raised in a minor samurai family and his father belonged to the firefighting force assigned to Edo Castle. While he began his artistic training in 1811, Hiroshige's genius went largely unnoticed until 1832. According to current scholarship, that year Hiroshige accompanied the official delegation traveling the Tokaido to deliver the shogun's annual gift of horses to the emperor. The artist was so inspired by his experience traversing the varied and beautiful landscape that he transformed his many travel sketches into designs for full-color prints immediately upon his return. These compositions became the incomparable *53 Stations of the Tokaido*, a series of 55 prints published by Hoeido between 1832 and 1833.¹

The enormous popularity of this first Tokaido series led Hiroshige on a lifelong artistic exploration of the famous highway. He designed over three-dozen interpretations of the Tokaido over the course of his career. Among shifting formats and varied emphases, the 1855 series *53 Stations of the Tokaido*, known as the *Upright Tokaido*, stands

out as one of Hiroshige's most popular visions of the road. In this 55 print series, he explores the familiar path from a new perspective. Published by Tsutaya Kichizo (Koeido), the *Upright Tokaido* breaks from horizontally oriented landscapes, using vertical space to capture the distinctive beauty of each station. Known for its distant views and plentiful waterside scenes, this series presents Hiroshige's bold eye for composition and enduring romance with the Japanese landscape.

The history of the Tokaido begins long before Hiroshige's time. Though the road attracted travelers as early as the 8th century, it became an exciting and integral aspect of life during the Edo period. As centuries of ancient feudal wars came to an end in 1603, Japan entered an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. Surpassing one million residents, Edo became Japan's largest city.² The Tokaido became the vital channel of administration and transportation, essential to the political stability of the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate and to the economic health of Edo. The road was tactically designed for battle and enabled the careful regulation of trade and travelers.

The majority of traffic on the Tokaido resulted from *sankin kotai*, or alternate residence duty. By 1642, all *daimyo* (regional lords) were required to spend a portion of each year in Edo. Between 250 and 280 *daimyo* passed through the capital in a given year. While a *daimyo* was allowed to return to his feudal domain following his allotted service (often a period of six months), his family would remain in Edo as collateral. Through *sankin kotai*, the shogunate deprived regional lords of the time or funds to stage a coup.

In addition to obligatory travelers, the Tokaido attracted great numbers of merchants, monks, messengers, pilgrims, and adventurers. The average messenger could travel from Edo to Kyoto in 10 to 14 days, but if the message was more urgent, the wealthy senders could choose an express service. This relay method took a total of approximately 3 days and 10 hours. Aside from these official couriers and a steady flow of merchants pedaling their goods, the Tokaido surged with pilgrims. Though guides, novels, and woodblock prints reveal the widespread fervor for adventure, travel for the sake of pleasure remained prohibited.

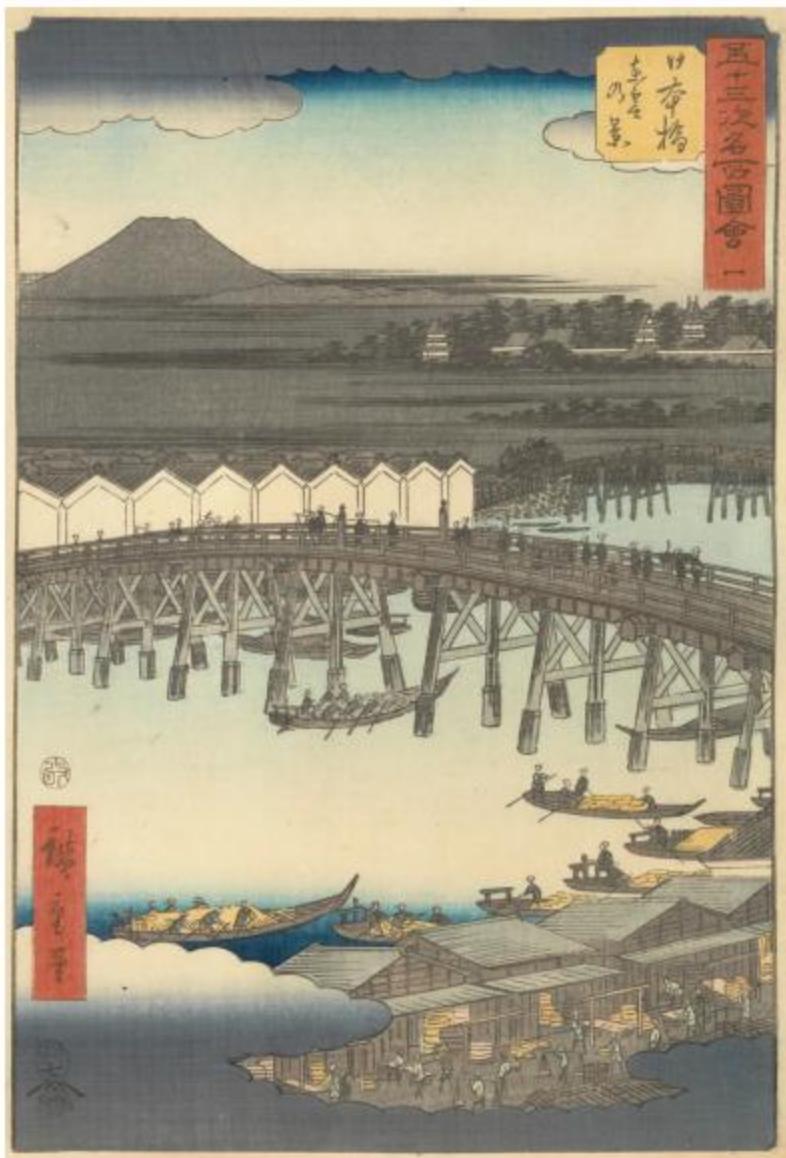
Many *chonin* (members of Edo's newly emerged merchant class) visited Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines to satisfy their wanderlust. Though travel restrictions had loosened, religious journeys were the only sanctioned form of travel for commoners. While certainly some of these pilgrimages were religiously motivated, many *chonin* traveled for pleasure under the pretense of pilgrimage. The Tokaido promised local souvenirs, regional delicacies, and storied outlooks, all of which were described in the popular guidebooks of the time. Familiar with these works, the Edo-period traveler would embark on their journey aware of the pleasures and dangers of the road ahead.

Hiroshige's wholehearted discovery and celebration of travel revived the landscape genre. Tracing back to the Heian period (794-1185), *meisho-e*, or pictures of famous places, were tied to *waka* poetry, pairing specific, idealized landscapes with sentimental poetic verse. Hiroshige traded this stale, aristocratic conception for recognizable scenes of contemporary Japan. These works were relatable to Edo's burgeoning merchant class, inviting the viewer to capture a memory or revel in travel aspirations. His ability to create designs that convey an intimacy of life on the road and a palpable atmosphere of each specific moment is unsurpassed. By his death in 1858, he had produced over 5,000 unique print designs, more than 2,000 of which presented scenic views of his beloved Japan.

Amidst changing seasons and creative viewpoints, the *Upright Tokaido* guides the viewer through each station of this historic road, providing a window into Edo-period culture with each print. Hiroshige incorporates the use of reflection and single-point perspective into his distinct pictorial style to create daring and dynamic compositions. His innovative use of cropping and diagonal line emphasizes the natural splendor of the journey. Often reduced to silhouettes, travelers become secondary to the landscape in this series. Hiroshige takes advantage of the vertical orientation to create expansive views with distant horizons, frequently marked by Mt. Fuji. With a lyricism of color and form, a palpable warmth, and creative composition, Hiroshige forefronts the natural beauty of the Tokaido. While novels, prints, and guidebooks celebrate the human pleasures and pitfalls of the journey, the *Upright Tokaido* resounds as an ode to the Japanese landscape.

1. Though the venture began as a collaborative between effort Takenouchi Magohachi (Hoeido) and Tsuruya Kiemon, only 11 prints were released jointly. Hoeido alone published the remaining 44 designs.

2. Donald Jenkins, *The Floating World Revisited* (Honolulu: Portland Art Museum and University of Hawaii, 1993), 7.



1. Nihonbashi

Located in the heart of Edo, Nihonbashi, the “Bridge of Japan,” marked entrance to, or exit from, Edo, the Eastern capital of Japan. Home to the Tokugawa Shogunate, Edo was the political and commercial center of the country during the Edo period (1603-1868). Hiroshige emphasizes the size of the bridge, reducing figures to crossing silhouettes.

Ref. #: JPI-67176



2. Shinagawa

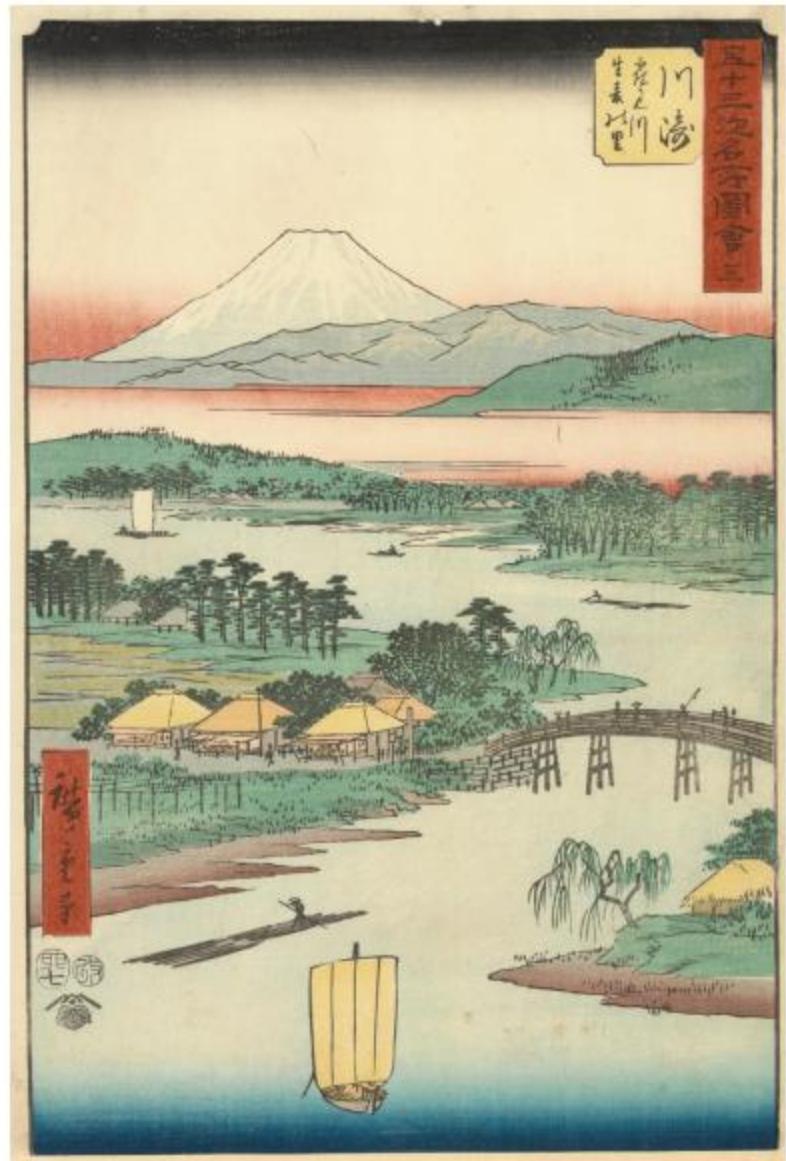
As the first *shukuba machi* (post-station town) on the road, Shinagawa teemed with exhausted travelers near journey's end, and bright-eyed adventurers fresh from Edo. This seaside station boasted entertainment, popular teahouses, and plentiful restaurants to satisfy its overwhelming foot traffic.

Ref. #: JPI-67184

3. Kawasaki

The traveler had to cross the Tama River to reach Kawasaki. They were required to hire boatmen, as the river was too deep to cross on foot. Though Hiroshige depicts the early Edo-period bridge crossing the Tama River, this bridge was destroyed by storms multiple times and ultimately never rebuilt.

Ref. #: JPI-67186



4. Kanagawa

Kanagawa was known for its cliff-top views overlooking Edo bay. In 1853, Commodore Perry's "black ships" sailed into this scenic bay bearing President Millard Fillmore's invitation to establish trade and diplomatic relations with the United States. The following year, the Tokugawa Shogunate accepted this invitation, ending over 250 years of *sakoku* (closed country). Hiroshige captures the famous bay lit by moonlight.

Ref. #: JPI-67194





5. Hodogaya

The town of Hodogaya was originally three separate post-stations. In 1597, the Tokugawa Shogunate united these rural villages into a single country town. Wooded hills and the low rice fields of Totsuka stretch into the horizon, while in town, a restaurant advertises *soba*, or buckwheat noodles, to hungry travelers.

Ref. #: JPI-67195



6. Totsuka

At the intersection of three roads— the Atsugikaido, the old Kamakurakaido, and the Tokaido— Totsuka was home to many inns. While abbreviated figures can be seen headed towards town, Hiroshige focuses on the farmers at work just beyond the road. Mt. Fuji, a persistent presence in this series, looms in the distance.

Ref. #: JPI-67196

7. Fujisawa

Driven by religious devotion or the urge for adventure, pilgrimage was one the most common reasons for travel in Edo-period Japan. Fujisawa satisfied both Buddhist and Shinto pilgrims alike. Yugyoji was one of busiest centers for Buddhist worship on the Tokaido, while Shinto followers flocked to Enoshima Benten Shrine.

Ref. #: JPI-67200



8. Hiratsuka

Though Hiroshige took many liberties in his portraits of life on the Tokaido, he accurately captures the expansive landscape at Hiratsuka. As the rivers spread across the foreground, the rugged top of Mt. Koma and snowy tip of Mt. Fuji punctuate the horizon. At the foot of Mt. Koma, the pine colonnade shades the road.

Ref. #: JPI-67202

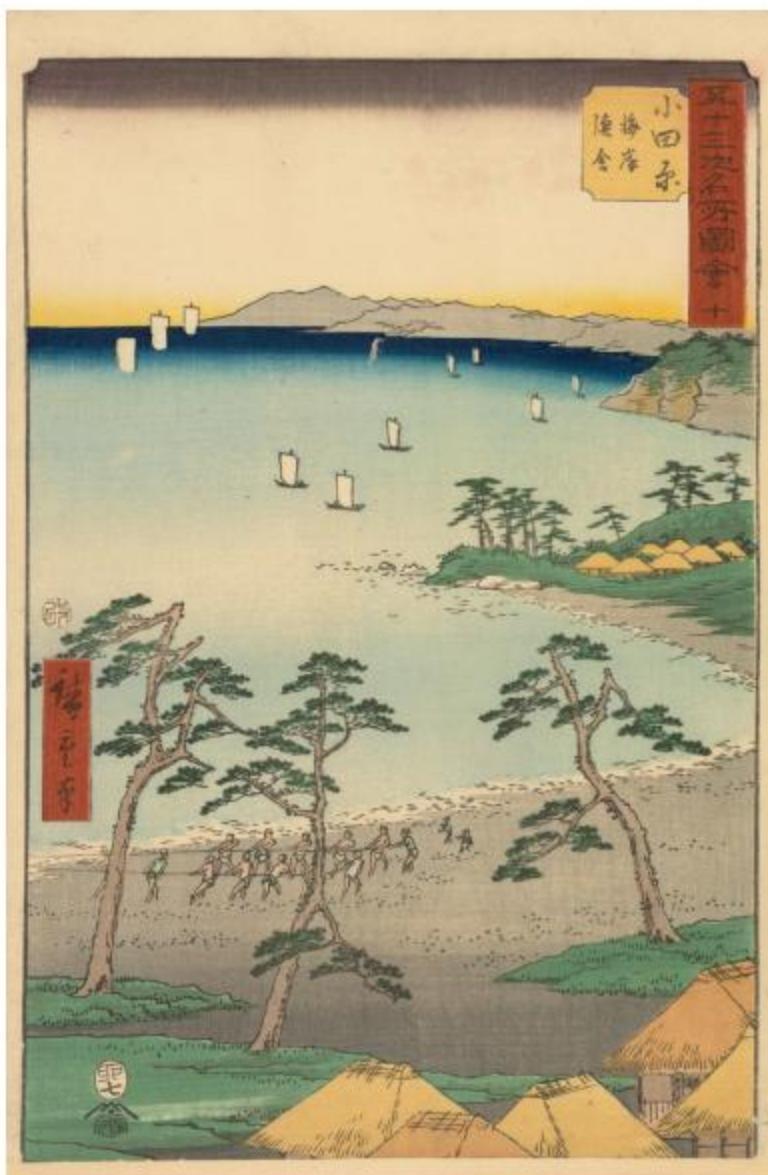




9. Oiso

Oiso rests on Sagami Bay. Poems composed about Oiso assume a somber tone, echoing a romantic tragedy that happened at this station. Hiroshige joins in this literary tradition through the melancholy tone of this print. Small grave markers dot the foreground in this peaceful view of the bay.

Ref. #: JPR-67205



10. Odawara

Odawara served as a cultural and economic center along the Tokaido since the construction of Odawara Castle in 1496. At this station, the traveler faced another river crossing. In this print, Hiroshige does not allude to the trials ahead at Hakone Pass, but presents a view of the bay and a company of men pulling an unseen boat to shore.

Ref. #: JPR-67235

11. Hakone

Hakone station confronted travelers with the most physically challenging and dangerous portion of their journey. Hakone Pass crawled with eager bandits along perilous terrain, yet the mountain pass compensated travelers with stunning views and *onsen* (hot springs) along the way. Hiroshige captures night travel, presenting tiny figures bearing immense flickering torches to light their arduous ascent.

Ref. #: JPI-67238



12. Mishima

Situated at the western entrance to Hakone Pass, Mishima was home to a famous Shinto shrine and the only station in Izu province. Hiroshige emphasizes the populous and lively nature of this station in this busy street scene. A towering stone *torii* stands to the left of the composition, while the two-story teahouses recede into the horizon.

Ref. #: JPI-67241





13. Numazu

Numazu was famous for the Forest of a Thousand Pines. In this series, Hiroshige captures the quiet beauty of this station in winter. Mt. Fuji blends into the snow-covered landscape as the Kano river winds through the composition, clear and blue.

Ref. #: JPI-67244



14. Hara

The small town of Hara was known for its spectacular views of Mt. Fuji. Hiroshige expresses the magnitude of this sight by breaking the mountain's peak through the border: Japan's most sacred mountain cannot be contained by the composition.

Ref. #: JPI-67246

15. Yoshiwara

Following a devastating tsunami in 1680, Yoshiwara station was rebuilt further inland in 1682. Hiroshige does not allude to this past, concentrating instead on the towering beauty of Mt. Fuji. The ascending birds and gentle clouds emphasize the breathtaking height of the mountain.

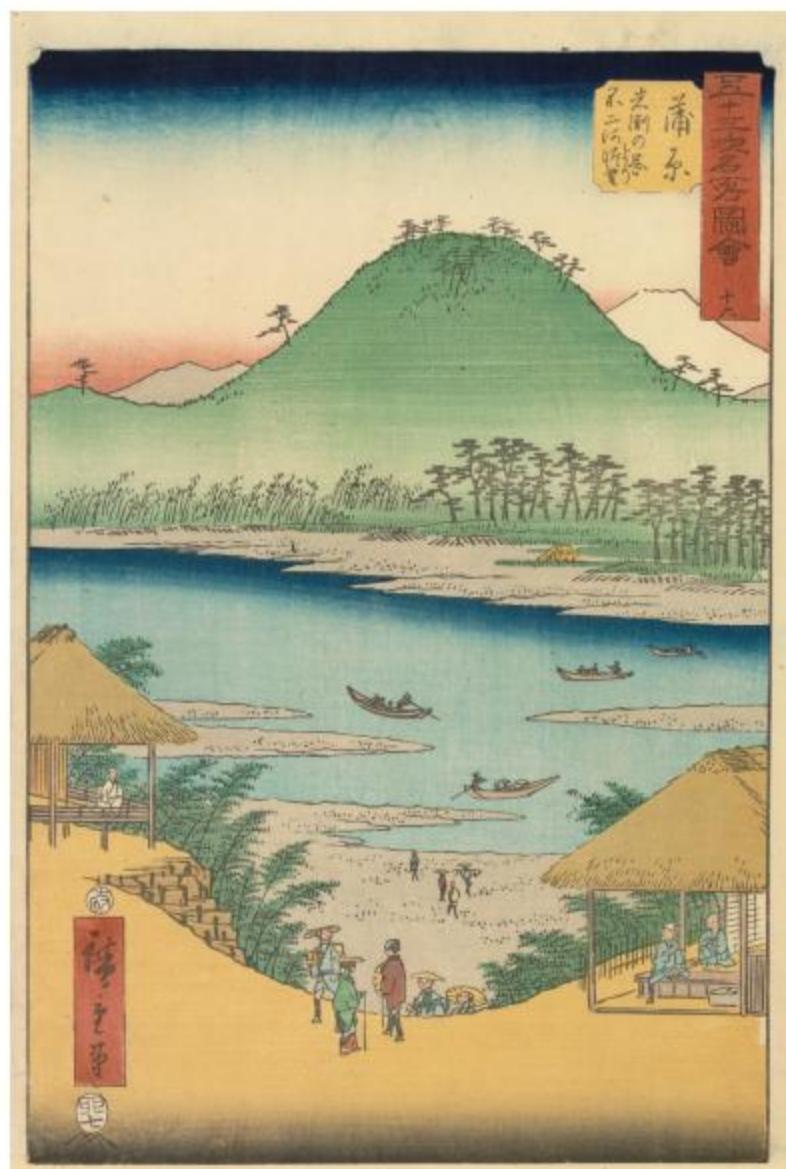
Ref. #: JPI-67247



16. Kanbara

In this print, Hiroshige presents the Kanbara of his imagination, blending real and imagined elements to create an atmospheric landscape and dynamic composition. In Hiroshige's words, "though there are many things that I have abbreviated, the composition is exactly like a true reflection of the scenery, so those who cannot travel can find some pleasure in them."¹

Ref. #: JPI-67248



¹. Tadashi Kobayashi, *Masterpieces of Landscape: Ukiyo-e Prints from the Honolulu Academy of Arts*, (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2003), 24.



17. Yui

Satta Pass presented travelers with one of the most spectacular views on the Tokaido. As abbreviated figures climb the arduous path, far below sailboats bob in Suruga Bay. Though Hiroshige would have traversed this scenic outlook, travelers of the early Edo period were not as lucky. Before the completion of the mountain path in 1655, travelers were required to wait at the cliff's edge until the tide receded enough to proceed to Okitsu on the beach.

Ref. #: JPI-67254



18. Okitsu

Located on the coast of Tago, Okitsu station marked where the Okitsu River flows into Suruga Bay. Though this station was famous for the Forest of Miho (Mihonomatsubara), Hiroshige focuses on travelers crossing the river.

Ref. #: JPI-67255

19. Ejiri

At Ejiri station, the traveler looks out upon the dark pines in the Forest of Miho and the mouth of the Okitsu River. From this elevated viewpoint, the traveler can see how far this famous pine grove extends into the water. Hiroshige asserts the expansiveness of this view as boats recede toward the colorful clouds on the horizon.

Ref. #: JP1-67256

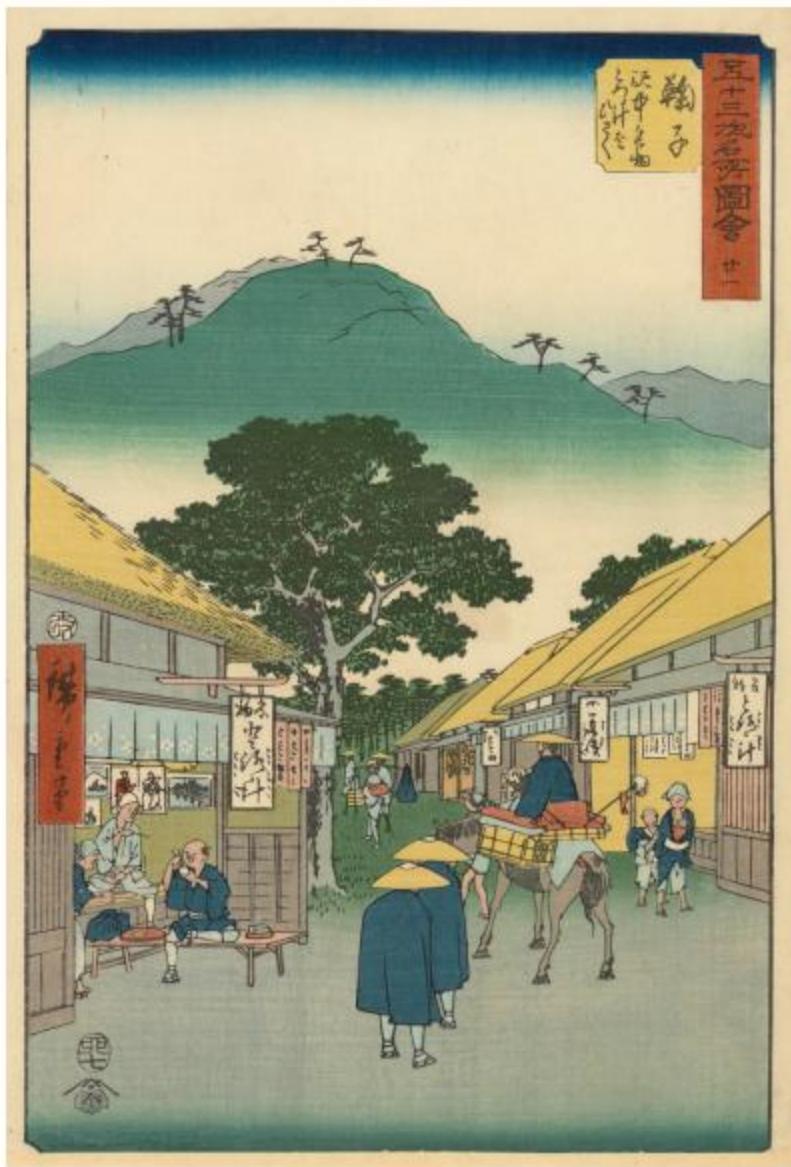


20. Fuchu

Resting on the bank of the Abe River, Fuchu was a provincial capital of ancient Japan. Home to Sunpu Castle, the household of a regional lord, Fuchu offered an urban experience in comparison to the more rural stations. In this print, Hiroshige presents a bustling evening beneath a crescent moon.

Ref. #: JP1-67257





21. Mariko

Mariko station was celebrated for *tororojiru*, a soup made from *yamaimo* paste. A *yamaimo* is a starchy root vegetable. In Hiroshige's time, over a dozen shops would offer this local specialty to hungry travelers. Hiroshige captures this profusion of vendors with sharp, single-point perspective in this print.

Ref. #: JPr-67258



22. Okabe

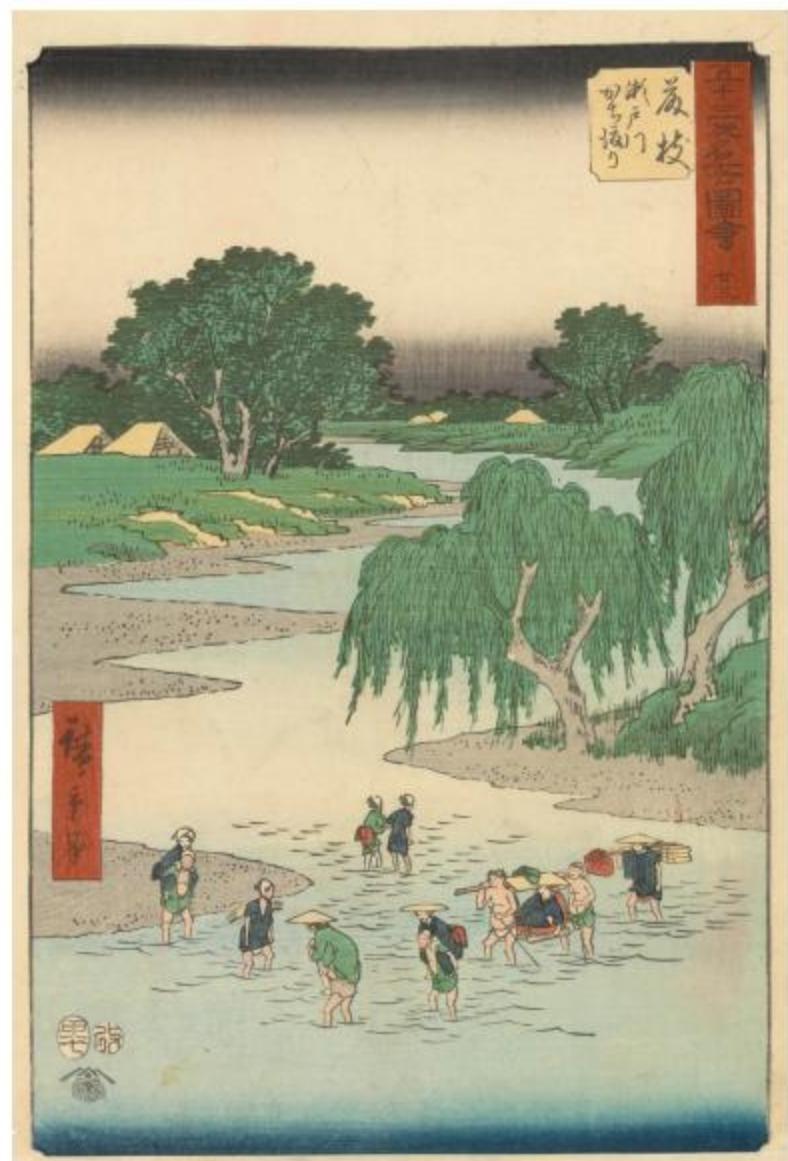
The Tokaido narrows, cutting through Utsuno Mountain, as the traveler approaches Okabe station. Trees and dark ivy climb the steep hillsides of this notoriously narrow pass. Travel guides would warn readers to take extra care, assuring them that such caution would be rewarded with a breathtaking outlook.

Ref. #: JPr-67430

23. Fujieda

Situated between the Abe and Oi Rivers, Fujieda was a station on both the Tokaido and the Unuma Kaido. Fujieda station was a prosperous castle town in Tanaka Domain. In this print, Hiroshige presents the different services travelers could use to cross the river. Some ride upon the shoulders of waders, while a wealthier traveler glides across the river in a covered palanquin.

Ref. #: JP1-67433



24. Shimada

Located on the wide bank of the Oi River, Shimada station could become a temporary impasse for travelers. During dry spells, the river dwindled to shallow stream; yet, heavy rains would transform the broad Oi into deep and dangerous rapids. Following rainy spells, travelers had to wait for the water to calm. Hiroshige takes advantage of the vertical format to emphasize the astounding width of the river.

Ref. #: JP1-67435





25. Kanaya

The village of Kanaya rests upon a broad plain on the far bank of the Oi River. In this print, Hiroshige views the sprawling river and station from the mountain road. The figures centered in the foreground create a sense of scale, establishing a sweeping view of the village below, river beyond, and snow-tipped Mt. Fuji on the horizon.

Ref. #: JPI-67436



26. Nissaka

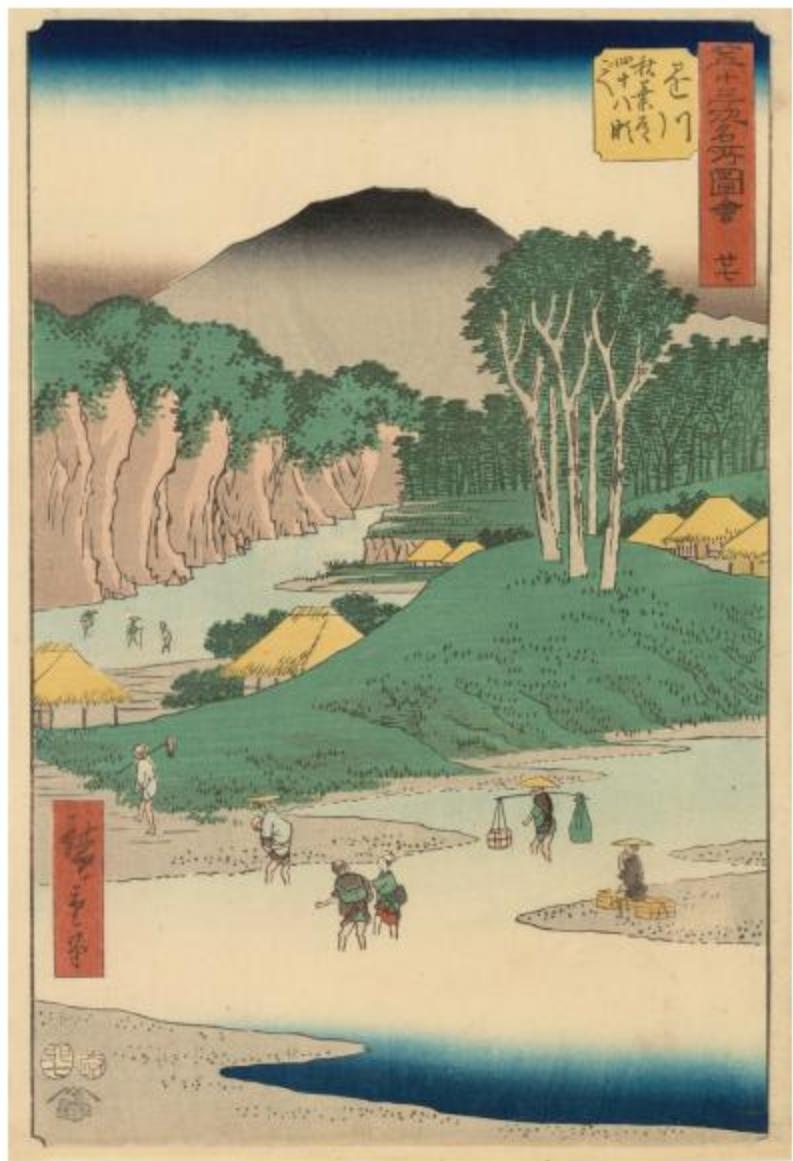
A large stone interrupts the steep ascent on Sayononakayama Road to Nissaka. Popularly known as the “night weeping stone (*yonaki-ishi*),” legends states that the stone marks the spot where a brutal murder was committed. Hiroshige alludes to this local legend even from his distant viewpoint.

Ref. #: JPI-67437

27. Kakegawa

Situated along an old salt route of Shinano province, Kakegawa was both a station stop and a prosperous castle town. For Shinto pilgrims bound for Akiba Shrine, this station marked the last official station before the 20-mile trek to the shrine. In this print, Hiroshige hints towards the challenges of this pilgrimage, shrouding Mt. Akiba's distant peak in shadow.

Ref. #: JPR1-67441



28. Fukuroi

Fukuroi station was a nexus for Buddhist pilgrims. The small village was home to three important Buddhist temples—Hattasan Sonei-ji, Kasuisai, and Yusen-ji—but Hiroshige chooses to portray a look at life outside of town. Situated amidst sprawling rice fields, Fukuroi offered the perfect kite flying conditions. Hiroshige illustrates this local pastime in this print.

Ref. #: JPR1-67442





29. Mitsuke

Known as “Middle Town,” Mitsuke marked the midpoint between Edo and Kyoto. The strong current of the Tenryu River prevented simple river crossings. Though sturdy boats carried travelers across the river towards Hamamatsu, the boatmen would refuse to brave the rivers depths in inclement weather. In this print, Hiroshige emphasizes the width of the Tenryu, or “Heaven Dragon,” River through the distant horizon.

Ref. #: JPI-67443



30. Hamamatsu

This castle town along the Tenryu River was home to Tokugawa Ieyasu before he founded the Tokugawa Shogunate. Today, the bustling 19th century town of Hamamatsu has become a large modern city. In the print, Hiroshige gives special care to the tangibly rough waves. As the figures approach a sacred pine, these waves lap against the sandy grove.

Ref. #: JPI-67444

31. Maisaka

Maisaka was a fishing village on the Eastern shore of Lake Hamana. This small station was noted for its striking view of Imaki Point, which extends into the sea against a golden sky in the print. To reach Arai station, travelers would have to sail across the lake by ferry, such as those seen floating in the foreground of Hiroshige's composition.

Ref. #: JPI-67445



32. Arai

Many travelers slept through the two-mile ferry ride across Imagiri (where Lake Hamana meets the Pacific Ocean). Hiroshige suggests the length of this journey as boats disappear into the horizon. Arai was home to an important government barrier. Spanning both land and sea, this barrier allowed the shogunate to regulate the flow of people and weapons.

Ref. #: JPI-67446





33. Shirasuga (Shirasuka)

By the Edo period, Shirasuga sat atop Shiomi Hill. In this print, Hiroshige captures the original site overlooking the sea rather than the view from his own journey. Travelers ascend the lush hill as teams of porters carry goods down to the town. As with many prints in this series, a view of water defines the composition.

Ref. #: JPr-67447



34. Futagawa

Futagawa station gained a reputation for its sweet snacks. Travelers were sure to stop by the teashops at Sarugababa, a sweeping plain on the edge of town. Here, travelers could buy *kashiwamochi*, sweet rice cakes wrapped in oak leaves. Hiroshige highlights this regional delicacy, depicting the roadside teahouses.

Ref. #: JPr-67448

35. Yoshida

Built 1505, Yoshida Castle was the center of Yoshida Domain. As a wealthy port, this station presented the traveler with one of the few bridges on the Tokaido. Hiroshige depicts a *daimyo* procession crossing the river in the foreground as the Toyo River flows into the distance. Beyond a pine grove, the castle rises through the mist.

Ref. #: JPI-67449



36. Goyu

Goyu was best known for its multi-talented waitresses. Though the shogunate outlawed prostitution along the Tokaido in 1659, by 1718, each establishment was allowed to employ two *meshimori onna*, or “meal serving women,” who doubled as prostitutes. Despite the reputation of this station, Hiroshige presents a quiet riverside scene outside of town.

Ref. #: JPI-67450





37. Akasaka

One of the pleasures of travel was the ability to meet new people. Many travel guides and novels recount the flaring tempers and fast friends that dot a journey on the Tokaido. In this print, Hiroshige comically portrays a disagreement between travelers. A cartoonish figure raises his walking stick at his companion as an onlooker holds his head in nervous anticipation.

Ref. #: JPI-67451



38. Fujikawa

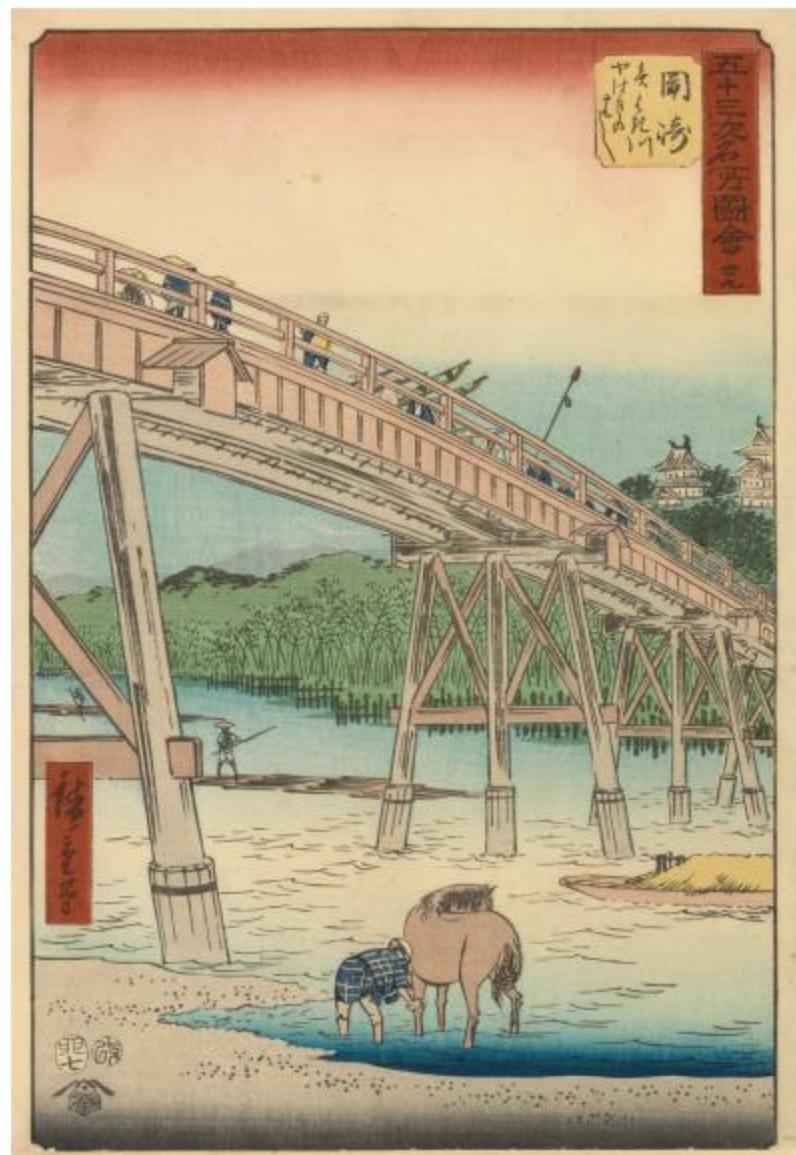
Following a seven-mile trek from Akasaka, a company of travelers descends into snowy Fujikawa station. Snowflakes continue to fall from the grey *bokashi* of the night sky, bright white against the river and heavy on the pine boughs. Hiroshige demonstrates his mastery of atmosphere in this work, capturing the quiet elegance of a snowy night.

Ref. #: JPI-67452

39. Okazaki

Located at Okazaki station, Yahagibashi was the longest bridge in Edo-period Japan. Crossing the Yahagi River, the bridge was said to span 1248 feet. In Hiroshige's era, this station was a prosperous castle town. In this print, a procession crosses the bridge overhead, but Hiroshige directs the eye to a peasant washing a horse in the river below.

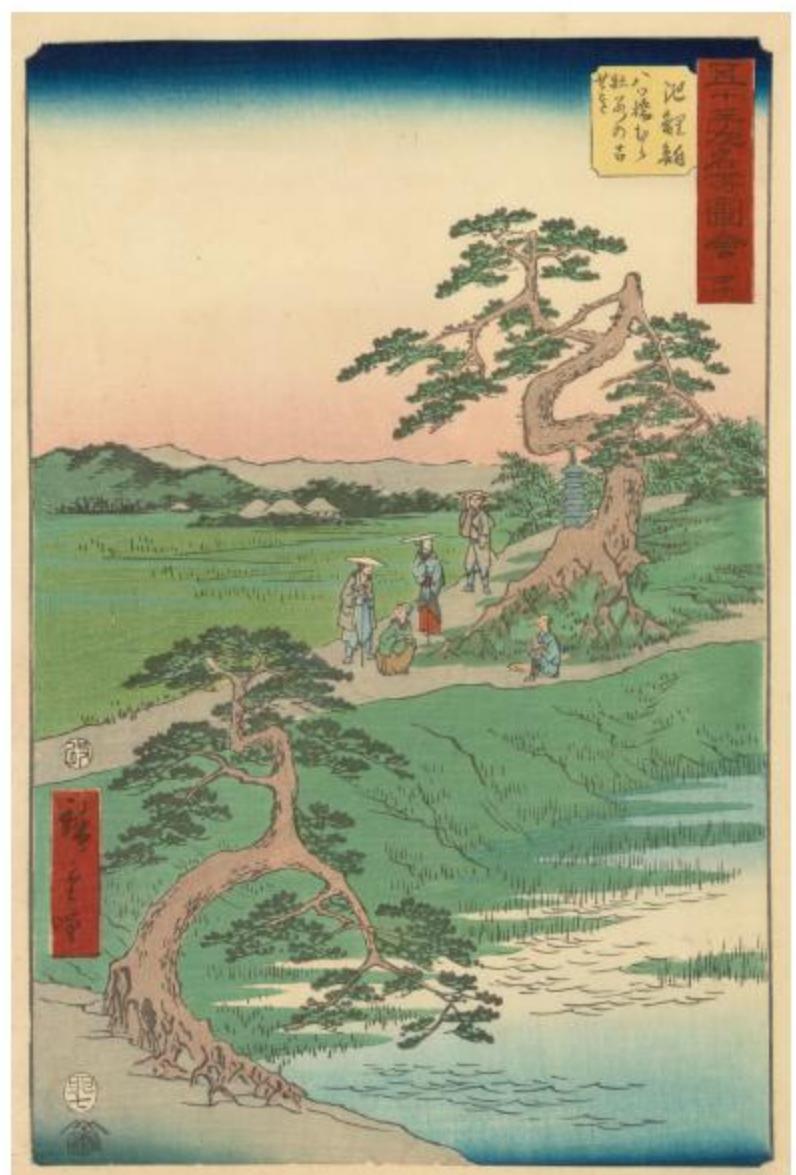
Ref. #: JP1-67471



40. Chiryu

The fame of Chiryu station stretches back to the Heian period. In the classic *Tale of Ise*, the famed "Eight-Part Bridge" zigzagged through Chiryu's many blooming irises. Though the bridge from the story had fallen to ruin by the time Hiroshige arrived, it is significant that Hiroshige turned away from the classic tale. Instead, he chose to portray a scene that would resonate with the common Edo-period viewer. In this work, pilgrims rest beneath a gnarled pine.

Ref. #: JP1-67472





41. Narumi

Both Narumi station and its neighboring town of Arimatsu were renowned for their tie-dyed fabrics. These specific textiles were primarily used to make *yukata*, light kimono worn in the summer or following a bath. Hiroshige elegantly portrays the delicate designs and vivid colors of this local art. To the left of this elongated composition long strips of white, rose, crimson, and myriad blues flutter from a drying stand.

Ref. #: JPI-67474



42. Miya

Translating to “shrine,” Miya was home to Atsuta Shrine, a significant Shinto center and home to one of three divine symbols of the imperial throne: the *Kusanagi-no-tsurugi* (the Sacred Sword of the Emperor). In this print, bright and bold *torii* (gates) herald the entrance to the famous shrine, marking the boundary between the everyday world and the spiritual realm.

Ref. #: JPI-67475

43. Kuwana

At Kuwana, the Kiso Three Rivers (the Ibi River, the Nagara River, and the Kiso River) converge in Ise Bay. A traveler from Miya station could cross these three rivers, or they could sail across the bay to reach this wealthy castle town. Many chose to sail nearly 15 miles across Ise Bay to avoid the hassle of the rivers. Truncated in the foreground, a ship carries such travelers towards the Kuwana.

Ref. #: JPI-67476



44. Yokkaichi

Yokkaichi was a thriving market town whose name means “fourth day market.” This station bustled with markets for all types of goods, traditionally held on the fourth of each month. In this print, Hiroshige portrays travelers crossing the winding tributaries in the lowland bordering Ise Bay.

Ref. #: JPI-67477





45. Ishiyakushi

Ishiyakushi station developed around the local Buddhist temple. Nestled in the countryside, this temple was home to a statue of Yakushi Buddha, a guardian against misfortune. Hiroshige affectionately evokes country life in this print. Beneath the blushing petals of the cherry blossoms, a figure directs a traveler towards the shrine.

Ref. #: JPI-67478



46. Shono

While the smallest rural station on the Tokaido, Hiroshige turned to Shono as an opportunity for compositional exploration throughout his *Tokaido* series. In the *Upright Tokaido*, he provides a snapshot of Edo-period life, presenting porters on their way to a rice festival. As the ribbons and ceremonial papers rustle in the wind, one can feel the excitement of a festival day.

Ref. #: JPI-67480

47. Kameyama

Located four-and-a-half miles from Shono, Kameyama was a thriving castle town. In this dramatic rendering, lightning cracks above the distant structure and heavy rain falls in insistent streaks. Figures bow their heads against the downpour and trudge uphill to the station. Today, many buildings from the 19th century station are within the modern city of Kameyama.

Ref. #: JP1-67481



48. Seki

Established at the intersection of three major highways, Seki was a bustling town. At this station, travelers could decide to follow the path to Yamato province, branch off to the Grand Ise Shrines, or continue along the Tokaido to Kyoto. Though Hiroshige focuses largely on the landscape in this print, government buildings can be seen to the right of the print. Seki was also home to the third government barrier along the Tokaido.

Ref. #: JP1-67482





49. Sakanoshita

Situated at the entrance to Suzuka Pass, Sakanoshita boasted breathtaking mountain views. The natural landscape around this station inspired painters and poets as early as the Muromachi period (1392-1573). In this print, Hiroshige focuses on a stunning waterfall. On a small path, travelers proceed to a cave housing Buddhist sculptures.

Ref. #: JPI-67484



50. Tsuchiyama

Tsuchiyama was known for its beautiful, yet incessant, rain. In this print, Hiroshige defies tradition and depicts unusually pleasant weather. He nestles Tamura Myojin Shrine into the pine grove, a shrine dedicated to the memory of the famous 8th century writer Sakanoue no Tamuramaro.

Ref. #: JPI-67485

51. Minakuchi

As the Tokaido descends from the mountains onto the Kansai Plain, the traveler arrives at Minakuchi station. Though this station was known for its *kanpyo* (dried gourd shavings), Hiroshige forgoes the regional specialty for a human focus. He portrays this microcosm of life in rural Japan with palpable warmth. Farmers make their way down the path as a traveler admires the rushing stream.

Ref. #: JPI-67486



52. Ishibe

Ishibe was a fairly desolate station. Travelers could enjoy a simple meal of rice and boiled vegetables, baked bean curd, and rice wine at a roadside restaurant, but this station offered little entertainment or lodging to the traveler. The busy inn in this print suggests that this is, in fact, a scene from the nearby porter station of Mekawa.

Ref. #: JPI-67487





53. Kusatsu

Kusatsu flowed with travelers from both the Tokaido and the Nakasendo, a large highway that traversed the mountains between Edo and Kyoto. These two thoroughfares merged between Kusatsu and Kyoto. In this print, Hiroshige turns away from the rhythm of life on the shore to the many boats setting sail.

Ref. #: JPr-67488



54. Otsu

Otsu was the traveler's last stop before their arrival in Kyoto. Situated on the southwestern shore of Lake Biwa, this port town was tightly controlled by the Tokugawa Shogunate. This was a strategic move both economically and politically: the shogunate could regulate travel and trade while keeping an eye trained on the emperor.

Ref. #: JPr-67489

55. Sanjo Ohashi - Kyoto (Kyo)

Following a 10 to 14 day journey from Edo, Sanjo Bridge would carry the traveler across the currents of the Kamo River and into the heart of the imperial capital. Though Edo became the capital of Japan under the Tokugawa Shogunate, Kyoto remained an economic center and a stronghold for the arts throughout the Edo-period. In this print, Hiroshige obscures the city behind a pink-tinged haze as grey clouds suggest an incoming storm.

Ref. #: JPr-67490



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